

REMARKS

Specification Amendments

The specification has been amended to correct typographical and grammatical errors. On page 19, "thermoplastic" has been added. Support for this amendment can be found in Step 2 on page 19, line 8.

Claim Amendments

Claims 63-82, 84, and 86-88 have been amended for clarity and proper antecedent basis. Claims 47-62, 83 and 85 are canceled. New Claims 89-99 have been added. Claims 63-82, 84, and 86-99 are now pending in the application. No new matter is added as the claims are fully supported by the specification.

Claims 63 and 68 have been amended to insert the step of providing microcups as requested by the Examiner to provide proper antecedent basis for the claim language.

New Claims 89-93 directed to washing the microcups before being filed have been added. Support for these claims is found in the specification in examples 4, 5 and 6, pages 24-25.

Support for Claims 95 and 96 can be found in original Claim 74 and in the specification at, for example, page 11, line 12 to page 14, line 7.

Support for new Claims 97 and 98 can be found in original Claim 76 and in the specification at, for example, page 11, line 12 to page 14, line 7.

Support for new Claim 99 can be found in the specification at, for example, page 20, lines 7 - 9.

Claim Objections

Claims 63-73 are objected to because the cups lack antecedent basis. In response, Claims 63-73 have been amended to provide the antecedent basis. Withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 47, 51-53, and 56-58 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Nagae et al. (US 5,995,190); Claims 48, 50, 54-55, 59, and 61-62 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagae et al. in view of Aida et al (US 6,191,250); and Claims 49 and 60 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagae et al in view of Aida and Hakemi et al (US 5,843,333).

In the interest of expediting allowance of this application, Applicants have cancelled Claims 47-62, 83 and 85. The claims are cancelled without prejudice to future prosecution of the original claims or the original claims in an amended form in a continuation application.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of Claims 74-88 and Claims 63-73 (after amendment to overcome the objection as suggested by the examiner).

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicants believe that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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